

Best Practices in Contact Investigations

**THREE PERSPECTIVES-
CONTACT INVESTIGATIONS
IN VARIOUS SCHOOL
SETTINGS**

PANEL PRESENTATION FORMAT

- ◉ Contact investigations (CI) remain an important public health activity in TB control and prevention
- ◉ CIs in congregate settings pose additional challenges
- ◉ 3 short presentations about CIs in public school and university settings
- ◉ Reflect different aspects of conducting CIs
- ◉ Questions for the panel after all presentations

PRESENTERS

- ◉ Angela Crankfield-Edmond
 - Policy changes in the times of social media
- ◉ Jan Markowitz
 - Collaboration with a large university
- ◉ Kimberly Townsend
 - Using quantiFERON® in 2 public schools
- ◉ Questions for the panel

HIGH SCHOOL CONTACT INVESTIGATION: SOCIAL MEDIA INCREASES THE HYPE

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County Executive



**HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**
Prince George's County

BACKGROUND

- ◉ 177 students and staff identified as high and medium contacts
- ◉ Case played on a sports team and did not ride the bus
- ◉ Case of African descent
- ◉ New - Prince George's County Superintendent of Schools and Chief, School Health Services
- ◉ Prince George's County Health Department (PGCHD) has conducted several school contact investigations

CONTACT INVESTIGATION PREPARATION

- ◉ Initiated discussion with Prince George's County Public School (PGCPS) School Health Services (SHS)
- ◉ Phone call with Principal
 - Site visit planned to discuss clinic plans, space needed, and dates for testing
 - SHS did not participate
- ◉ Request made for classroom and teammate list--received quickly from the school
 - This went extremely well

CONTACT INVESTIGATION PREPARATION

- ◉ On site meeting held with the Principal and School Health Nurse
- ◉ Principal declined the offer for an information session for the staff
- ◉ Visited classrooms to determine any needs to expand investigation
- ◉ Health room selected by school as the place where the clinic will be held
- ◉ Flow of clinic determined (In the past, the meeting was attended by a SHS staff person)

CONTACT INVESTIGATION PREPARATION

- ◉ Informational letters prepared by the PGCHD
- ◉ Fact sheets provided to the school for dissemination to all staff and students
 - Students to take letters home
- ◉ Exposure letters and fact sheet were mailed to those considered to be exposed and needing testing and evaluation by the Health Department

EVENTS THAT OCCURRED-WEEK OF TESTING

- ◉ Testing occurred on Monday and Tuesday for those identified as exposed
- ◉ Principal, without discussion with Health Department, invited all teachers to come and be tested (n=79)
- ◉ Wednesday and Thursday were scheduled reading days. On Wednesday 5 positive TSTs
 - Included teachers not part of exposure group
- ◉ Green cards given to students with the result of the TST to take home to the parent
- ◉ Parent was called for those who tested positive to set up an appointment for further testing (QFT and chest x-ray) and evaluation

EVENTS THAT OCCURRED-WEEK OF TESTING

- ◉ Wednesday evening the investigation hit the news
- ◉ An interview had been conducted by PGCPS School Health Services staff
- ◉ Media was aware that additional people had tested positive
- ◉ Media deemed it an outbreak
- ◉ Normally the PGCHD Public Information Officer coordinates all media inquiries

EVENTS THAT OCCURRED-WEEK OF TESTING

- The word was spreading quickly that there was an outbreak of TB at the school
- **Students tweeted** things such as:
 - They're trying to kill us
 - There's an outbreak and they won't let us go home
 - The school needs to be closed and the air cleaned
 - Joking about the green cards and a student walk out at 10:45 am
- Students posted pictures covering their faces.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Difficult to control



EVENTS THAT OCCURRED-WEEK OF TESTING

- ◉ Angry parents picking up students
- ◉ Teachers also fed into student frenzy
 - Stating that the school should be closed
 - Teachers identified the case, and students started bullying
 - Case is of African descent and the fear of EBOLA probably didn't help
- ◉ Parents, students, and teachers showed up at the PGCHD TB Control Program

DAMAGE CONTROL

- Health Department Public Information Officer and I reported to the school the next morning
 - Media was awaiting our arrival
 - Interview was conducted
- At 10:45am (same time as planned walk out) **live broadcast to all classrooms-** information provided about
 - TB, signs and symptoms
 - Those identified as having exposure are being tested
 - Meaning of a positive TST
- Advised that there is NO outbreak and no need for anyone to go home

DAMAGE CONTROL

- ◉ I met with parents as they arrived to pick up children and explained the situation
- ◉ Many parents stated that they never received a letter, or any information
- ◉ It appears that the information letter either was not given to all the students and staff
- ◉ Students did not take letters home to the parents

DAMAGE CONTROL

- ◉ Several media interviews conducted
- ◉ Information session held with all staff
- ◉ Press Conference conducted
 - With Health Department and PGCPs School Health Services
- ◉ By the next day media was quiet

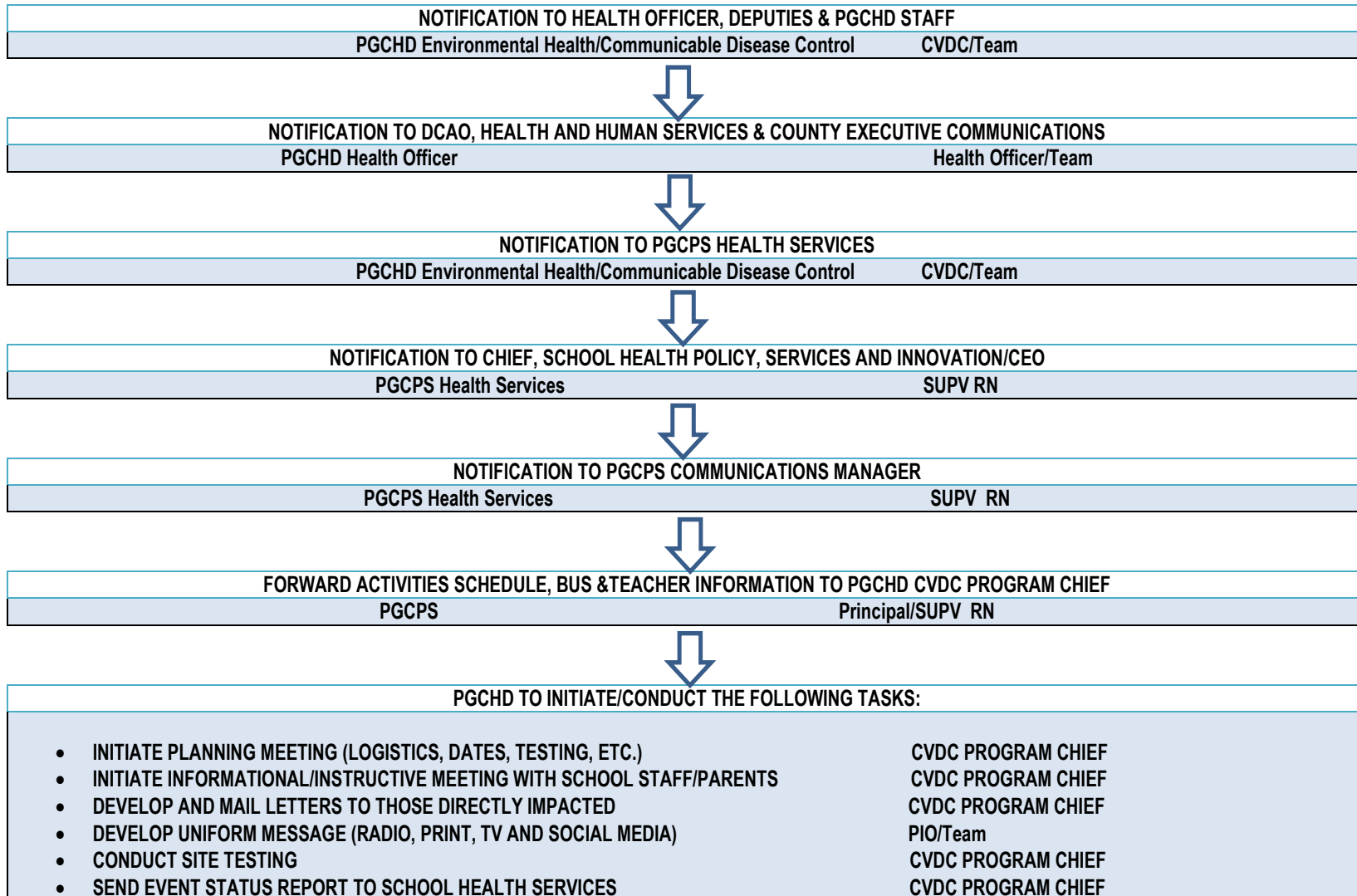


CHANGES TO PROCEDURES

- ◉ As a result communication protocol was created with the PGCPS School Board
- ◉ Health Services which made it very clear that the Health Department is the lead and will direct all contact investigation activities

FLOW CHART

SCHOOL CONTACT INVESTIGATION



CHANGES TO PROCEDURES

- ◉ Development and implementation of an administrative procedure in collaboration with PGCPS
- ◉ PGCHD will participate in the School Health Services Annual Pre-School Meetings to review administrative procedures with staff
- ◉ In the event of a communicable disease event, a **mandatory meeting** will be held between PGCHD, PGCPS School Health Services and the school staff (Principals, Teachers, Administrative Staff, Coaches, etc.) as needed

CHANGES TO PROCEDURES

- ◉ PGCPS School Health Services will be involved in all calls, meetings, and site visits
- ◉ PGCHD will receive all media requests, and will serve as lead for media outlets for public health issues.
- ◉ PGCHD/Parent Meeting will be offered as an option in all cases
- ◉ PGCHD will develop and mail information letters out
 - Signed by the Health Officer and CEO

CHANGES TO PROCEDURES

- ⦿ Test results will be mailed to parents and not provided to the students
- ⦿ The PGCHD Communications Team will provide the PGCPS Communications Manager with facts sheets and information to post on website and distribute

THANK YOU!